



For immediate release

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## **Elizabeth Burmaster Becomes CCSSO President**

*Washington, DC, November 20, 2006* – In a ceremony yesterday, Elizabeth Burmaster (WI) officially became the president of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). President Burmaster succeeds Valerie Woodruff (DE), and the passing of the gavel took place during CCSSO's Annual Policy Forum and Business Meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas.

"CCSSO is the collective of years of experience and wisdom of hundreds of individuals who have dedicated their lives to America's children—and every child's civil right to equity and opportunity in education," Burmaster said. "We are now at a critical crossroads where our students will be competing and, more importantly, collaborating with students from around the world. As chiefs and education leaders, it is our responsibility to lead the transformation necessary to implement 21<sup>st</sup> century learning in classrooms across our country."

In her charge to the Council on 21<sup>st</sup> century leadership, Burmaster laid out her vision for CCSSO. "Over the next year, as we come together as a united CCSSO and assert our role in the state/federal partnership, we can empower our local school districts in the ongoing work of raising student achievement; closing the achievement gap among economically disadvantaged students, students of color, and their peers; and move beyond No Child Left Behind to ensure that every child graduates prepared to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global society."

In her speech, President Burmaster described four key areas that will guide her work with members:

1. showing high-profile leadership at the state and national levels to make the case for public education as the foundation for our American democracy
2. developing a broad national consensus and shared vision for what the future of education looks like
3. moving to a 21<sup>st</sup> century agenda to get to the hard work of implementation including content, assessment, and professional development
4. engaging all stakeholders to galvanize support for public education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

CCSSO Executive Director Gene Wilhoit states, "Elizabeth Burmaster clearly has a strong understanding of the issues—and of the timeliness. She has a deep commitment to providing strong leadership to our members."

Burmaster begins her tenure as CCSSO president having served as chair of the Council's Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Reauthorization Task Force, which works to build on CCSSO's efforts to reinforce sound state and local education practices and to craft the Council's reauthorization proposal for ESEA. Under Burmaster's stewardship, the task force published its [ESEA Reauthorization Policy Statement](#) this October. She will continue to serve as chair of the task force during her presidency, which is a one year term.

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*The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.*